

IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 2-3, 8-14, and 23-25 without prejudice.

Please amend the following claims which are pending in the present application:

1. (Currently amended) A method of treating an electroless plating waste, comprising:

containing the waste in a container, the waste including a metal and a reducing agent;

decreasing an ability for the reducing agent to reduce the metal by adding an acid to the waste, resulting in a decrease in pH of the waste, decomposition of the reducing agent, and release of a gas from the waste in the container at a rate which is higher than without the decrease in the ability for the reducing agent to reduce the metal, the gas being contained in an enclosed volume;

exhausting the gas from the enclosed volume; and

draining the waste from the container.

2-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[3]] 1 wherein the pH decreases by at least 5.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[3]] 1, further comprising:
detecting a pH of the waste, the waste being drained after the pH falls below
a predetermined limit.
6. (Currently amended) The method of claim [[3]] 1 wherein the pH is
reduced by decomposing the reducing agent by at least one of:
- (i) an oxidation reaction, and
 - (ii) a hydrolysis reaction.
7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the metal is cobalt, the reducing
agent is at least one of DMAB, hypophosphite, formaldehyde, and borohydride,
and the ability for the reducing agent to reduce the metal is reduced by
decomposing the reducing agent, utilizing at least one of a hydrolysis reaction
and an oxidation reaction.
- 8-14. (Cancelled)
15. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
mixing and agitating the waste in the container.
16. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the waste is mixed and agitated
by at least one of purging a gas therethrough, mechanical mixing and agitation,

and recirculation.

17. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

heating the waste in the container.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17 wherein the waste is heated to at least 40° C.

19. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising:

heating the waste in the container.

20. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the reducing agent is at least one of:

- (i) DMAB;
- (ii) hypophosphite;
- (iii) borohydride; and
- (iv) formaldehyde; and
- (v) ~~glyoxylic acid.~~

21. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the metal is ~~at least one of:~~

- (i) cobalt;

(ii) ~~copper; and~~

(iii) ~~nickel.~~

22. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the gas is ~~at least one~~
~~of:~~

(i) ~~hydrogen;~~

(ii) ~~carbon monoxide; and~~

(iii) ~~trimethylamine.~~

23-25. (Cancelled)

26. (Currently amended) A method of treating an electroless plating waste,
comprising:

containing the waste in a container, the waste including a metal and a
reducing agent which tends to reduce the waste;

adding at least one stabilizing chemical to the waste in the container, the at
least one stabilizing chemical being selected to (i) decrease the ability of the
reducing agent to reduce the metal, and (ii) cause release of a gas from the waste
at a rate which is higher than without the at least one stabilizing chemical, the
gas being contained in an enclosed volume above a surface of the waste in the
container;

~~heating the waste in the container by at least 5° C;~~

agitating the waste in the container;
exhausting the gas from the enclosed volume;
detecting the concentration of the gas in the enclosed volume; and
draining the waste from the container, once the concentration of the gas falls
below a predetermined limit.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the ability for the reducing agent to reduce the metal is decreased by adding a stabilizing chemical to the waste which decreases a pH of the waste.

28. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the ability for the reducing agent to reduce the metal is decreased by adding a stabilizing chemical to the waste which changes a potential of the reducing agent from anodic toward cathodic.

29. (Original) The method of claim 26 wherein the ability of the reducing agent to reduce the metal is decreased by adding a stabilizing chemical to the waste which causes precipitation of the metal into a base of the container.

30. (Currently amended) The method of claim 26 wherein the ~~system~~ method is at least semi-automatic, depending on at least one of pH, temperature, measured gas concentration, and time.